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COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES FROM THE TERRITORIES OF THE BALTIC STATES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 23 August 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit for your information two statements issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania on 20 August (see annex I) and 22 August 1993 (see annex II) concerning the unilateral suspension by the Russian Federation of the withdrawal of its armed forces from the territory of Lithuania.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the distribution of the text of the present letter and its annexes as a document of the General Assembly, under item 32 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Algimantas GURECKAS
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/48/150 and Corr.1.

ANNEX I

Statement issued at Vilnius on 20 August 1993 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

On 20 August 1993, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania received an official statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation concerning the suspension of the withdrawal of the armed forces of the Russian Federation from Lithuanian territory.

The Russian Federation, disregarding resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), its international obligations and world public opinion to the effect that the withdrawal of its armed forces should not be conditional on any other matter, has violated the agreement of 8 September 1992 between the Republic of Lithuania and the Russian Federation containing the timetable for the withdrawal of its armed forces from Lithuanian territory.

Lithuania considers the suspension of the withdrawal a violation of existing agreements and an attempt to exert political pressure upon the process of bilateral negotiations.

Lithuania considers as unfounded accusations that Lithuania has altered its negotiating position or that it is purposely delaying the pace of negotiations. Lithuania waited two months for a response to proposals submitted by the President of Lithuania to the Russian Federation on 21 May 1993. During the most recent round of talks in Moscow between the two State delegations, our negotiating partners refused to discuss the text of a draft final agreement on the withdrawal. The statement by the Russian Federation that the matter of compensations for damages is a new demand is unfounded. In its efforts to maintain good relations with neighbouring countries, Lithuania seeks to address any disagreements through negotiations. Lithuania therefore rejects the accusations by the Russian Federation that it is unwilling to resolve matters of mutual concern.

The aim of the Republic of Lithuania is to restore historical justice. Lithuania is prepared to use all available legal and diplomatic means to achieve this goal.

ANNEX II

Statement issued at Vilnius on 22 August 1993 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

On 22 August 1993, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation released another statement concerning the withdrawal of the armed forces of the Russian Federation from Lithuanian territory.

In the statement, Lithuania is once again accused of unwillingness to discuss an agreement by which the completion of the withdrawal of Russian military forces would be confirmed. The same statement outlines the position of the Russian Federation that it is free from any obligations to compensate for damages inflicted upon Lithuania after 1 January 1992, as well as any obligations to transfer to Lithuania a portion of armaments so as to restore the defensive capabilities of the Republic of Lithuania. The statement refers to rumoured threats being made against Russian officers and their families residing in Lithuania and asserts that the Russian Federation will respond to potential provocations swiftly and resolutely.

Of particular concern to Lithuania is the position contained in the statement that the Russian Federation no longer sees any purpose to continue bilateral negotiations concerning the withdrawal of Russian armed forces.

Consequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania states the following:

(a) It appears that the Russian Federation has begun a propaganda campaign directed against Lithuania, with the intent to portray Lithuania as the unreasonable party. An argument presented by the Russian Federation to support this claim is the extent of damages suffered by Lithuania throughout the entire period of the Soviet occupation (146 billion United States dollars), which is allegedly included in the draft documents presented by Lithuania. In actuality, it has been the position of the Government of Lithuania to discuss only the existence of damages and the principle of compensation of these damages;

(b) The responsibility for damages, including those incurred since the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, has not disappeared simply because the negotiating process on this question has not been completed; and

(c) It is the official position of the Republic of Lithuania to ensure a peaceful environment for officers of the Russian Federation and their families residing in Lithuania, as well as the opportunity to depart the territory of Lithuania without hindrance. These conditions are indeed being secured. The position of Lithuania has not changed: negotiations are the only civilized means for the resolution of common problems. Attempts to resolve matters through other means - political, military or economic pressure - are unacceptable. Lithuania, unlike the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, sees considerable purpose in the continuation of negotiations.